

Institution: University of Dundee
Unit of Assessment: UoA 27 English Language and Literature
1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy

1.1 Overview

The English Language & Literature Unit of Assessment at the University of Dundee consists of 20 staff (19.5 FTE). Research in the unit covers a broad range of literary studies, from medieval to contemporary and comparative literatures. Alongside these strengths, the unit has developed distinctive research profiles in comics, film studies and creative practice, including drama and creative writing. The unit is based in the University's School of Humanities where research is organised and supported by an Arts & Humanities Research Institute (AHRI). This forms the context, structure and strategic framework for the unit's research. The AHRI comprises five interconnected research centres, two of which – the Centre for Critical & Creative Cultures and the Scottish Centre for Comics Studies – are led from within the unit. The AHRI is also connected to an additional two centres shared with other HEIs. The centres provide strategic focus for collaborations, interdisciplinary research and impact activity as part of a wider body of researchers within Humanities. Since 2014 the unit has developed interlinked strategic priorities in practice research, engagement with the creative economies and partnership-based initiatives, all of which have driven an expansion in staff numbers, postgraduate researchers, research-related income and wider impact: 19.5 FTE have been returned in this REF compared to 10.5 FTE in 2014; 18 doctorates were awarded in this period compared to 6 in the period to 2014 (and an additional 33 were undertaking doctoral research on the census date); more than £1 million of research-related funding was awarded to the unit in this period, compared to £263,657 of core research income reported in 2014; and the unit's Impact Case Studies arose directly from partnership-based projects with external organisations. The unit's current strategy aims to build upon these achievements, and to enable it to sustain its research and further extend its impact.

1.2 REF 2014 – Plans and Achievements

The unit has a rich and vital culture of research groups, partnerships and interdisciplinary work which have resulted from the successful implementation of its strategy set out in REF 2014, alongside structural changes to the management of research within the School of Humanities during the reporting period. The unit had three main aims in 2014: (1) to develop new interdisciplinary groupings; (2) to develop national and international collaborations; (3) to enhance and enable impact and public engagement. These specific aims were underpinned by a broad mission to enrich and build upon the unit's grounding in literary studies by engaging with creative practice. The unit's plan to create new research centres around the themes of (1) film and comics and (2) literature, intermediality and visual culture were fulfilled via the creation of the Scottish Centre for Comics Studies (est. 2014) and the Centre for Critical & Creative Cultures (est. 2015). These interdisciplinary centres have provided organisational focus for the unit's main achievements: they have been at the forefront in generating external income, building an expanded cohort of postgraduate researchers, driving a wide range of interdisciplinary collaborations with internal and external partners, and embedding impact and public engagement activity throughout the unit (details below). All of these developments have been supported by the appointment of new staff. Alongside the consolidation of established areas of literary studies (the appointments of **Gratzke, M. Morris, Yeung**), the unit has expanded its research expertise in comics (the appointment of **Nabizadeh**) and film studies (the appointments of **Barnes, Hartford, Salzberg**). It has also established a new focus on practice research, in line with one of its broad strategic aims: new appointments in this REF cycle (**Linsley, Nabizadeh, Yeung**) build upon the practice

research of several other staff in the unit, with the result that there is now a distinctive cluster in this area (the outputs returned include examples of the unit's creative practice). All of these achievements and developments, plus others noted later in this statement, show that the unit has pursued a successful strategy to make it sustainable. These developments have been aided by changes in the broader research environment of the School of Humanities and its AHRI (elaborated below).

1.3 Organisation of Research: the AHRI

The Arts & Humanities Research Institute (est. 2009) is managed by the School's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) and is responsible for the research environment within which the School's academics work. It formulates the School's research strategy and manages its research budget. The main strategic objectives of the AHRI are: to build bridges between disciplines within and beyond humanities subjects; to promote partnership-based research within and beyond academia; and to create an environment for postgraduate researchers to thrive and become leaders in their fields.

Following REF 2014, the AHRI accelerated this strategy by overseeing a systematic shift from discipline-based organisation of research to the development of thematic centres. It currently houses five centres and includes two others shared with other HEIs. The aim of this strategy has been to encourage and embed interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches to research. This enables the School to maximise the potential of overlapping themes across and beyond the School. The centres established as part of that shift are responsible for giving shape and focus to the range of Humanities research, and for developing research collaborations and public engagement. They are also important focal points for postgraduate research culture in the School (all PGRs are affiliated to at least one centre). The centres are designed to be flexible and facilitative, and to enable relatively small disciplinary units with porous boundaries to coalesce into a larger and more dynamic research environment. Several staff members contribute to the work of more than one centre (e.g., **Murray, Robson, Yeung**), which assists in promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration. The thematic approach to research organisation is not restrictive, and the AHRI deliberately embraces the diversity of humanities research. Research in the unit is a constituent element of this broader environment. The growing strategic emphasis on practice research in the School, which is fostering major collaborations with the creative industries, has largely emerged from the unit's work and is facilitated by the focus and vitality that has emerged through its centres.

1.4 English Language & Literature Research Centres

There are two research centres in the unit: the Centre for Critical & Creative Cultures and the Scottish Centre for Comics Studies. In addition, the unit is closely involved in the Centre for Poetic Innovation (shared with St Andrews) and the Centre for Scotland's Land Futures (shared with the Highlands & Islands and Stirling). Together these centres encompass the wide diversity of the unit's research, drawing it together to explore and create synergies across multiple areas of expertise. They are responsible for driving the unit's collaborations, interdisciplinary projects and impact activity, in line with the AHRI's and University's strategic objectives.

The interdisciplinary Centre for Critical & Creative Cultures (4C), established in 2015 by **Robson**, is dedicated to exploring the intersections of creative and critical practices across literary studies (**Cook, Gratzke, M. Morris, Varvogli, Williams**), performance (**George, Linsley, Robson**), creative writing (**Gunn, Low**) and visual media (**Barnes, Devarenne, Hartford, Hoyle, Salzberg**), including creative criticism and practice research. It has been led by **Robson** (2015-16 and 2019-present) and **Williams** (2016-19). The centre has fostered both individual projects and shared

research themes, such as adaptation. It has developed partnerships and collaborations across the University and with external bodies, both academic and professional, and has welcomed a wide variety of creative practitioners in the arts (see section 4 for examples). 4C's events and activities include research and research-related public engagement, ranging from lectures and masterclasses to reading groups, performances and work-in-progress seminars. One of its most high-profile activities is its role as Scottish Hub for the national Being Human Festival of the Arts and Humanities (**Cook** with **Williams** and **Murray**). The centre hosts regular research seminars and hosts international conferences and symposia, including the triennial conference of the International Association for Word & Image Studies (2014), the Symbiosis Biennial Conference on transatlantic literary and cultural relations (2019) and the British Association for Victorian Studies conference (2019).

The Scottish Centre for Comics Studies (SCCS), established in 2014, is an interdisciplinary research centre run by **Murray** and **Nabizadeh**. It is comprised of a central core of comics researchers based in the unit, the University's Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design (DJCAD), and the School of Education & Social Work. In 2015 **Murray** became the first Chair of Comics Studies in the world. SCCS has made a substantial contribution to the vitality of Comics Studies as a newly-emerging discipline. The aim of the centre is to cultivate and support an environment in which comics research can flourish, and to work with partners on topics such as visual and digital literacy, the environment, health and well-being, and entrepreneurship. Practice research in comics underpins the centre's major project in this reporting cycle, the Dundee Comics Creative Space (DCCS). Running since 2015, the DCCS is a social enterprise project co-funded by the Rank Foundation and the School of Humanities, and is comprised of workshop space, a comics studio (Ink Pot) and a publishing imprint (UniVerse). The centre utilises DCCS to host launches, exhibitions, invited speakers, masterclasses with comics industry professionals, training sessions, and after-school clubs. It also helps to support the work of comics artists as part of the local creative economy, having employed over 40 artists on its projects. The centre hosts regular research seminars and hosts prominent conferences, including the International Graphic Medicine Conference (2016) and the International Graphic Novel & Comics Conference (2017, co-hosted with Glasgow).

The Centre for Poetic Innovation (CPI) is jointly-led by **Roberts** and is shared with St Andrews. It provides a focus for: research activity on contemporary poetry and poetry criticism (**T. Morris**), which are in a state of rapid development and diversification driven by interaction with other art forms; transnational exchanges and collaborations; the dynamic of democratization in the arts (poetry in public spaces, the rise of performance poetry); and research into the potential of digital technology (electronic poetry). The CPI addresses these areas creatively, critically and historically, promoting and studying poetic innovation. **Roberts** and **Yeung** have maintained a long-established partnership with the Scottish Poetry Library through the work of the centre, and **Roberts** has established an on-going partnership with the StAnza poetry festival, along with colleagues at St Andrews, via the Royal Society of Edinburgh-funded project 'Poetry and Performance' (2016-17).

The Centre for Scotland's Land Futures (CSLF) brings together expertise from Humanities at Dundee, History at the Highlands & Islands and Law at Stirling. Previously directed by members of Dundee's History unit, since 2018 it has been co-led by **Yeung** (with colleagues from Highlands & Islands and Stirling). Its aim is to investigate Scotland's land issues within wider British and European contexts. It works closely with a number of partners and associates, including creative, charitable, and heritage bodies, as well as social enterprise groups, including Scottish Natural Heritage, the National Trust for Scotland, the Argyll Estates and Mount Stewart. Alongside the

AHRI's Centre for Scottish Culture (led from within the History unit), CSLF supports (through trusteeship, board and editorial memberships) the journal *Northern Scotland* (published by Edinburgh University Press).

1.5 Research and Impact Strategy

The unit's strategy for the next five years is to consolidate and build upon its research strengths, especially in its distinctive areas (comics, film studies, creative practice). There will be particular focus on the development of our creative economies strategy and an environment that fosters practice research. The unit will intensify its focus on activities led by its research centres, so that they can maximise the benefits of collective working. The centres will start to lead more proactively on the enhancement of research-income generation by building upon their expertise, interdisciplinary networks and collaborations with a range of internal and external partners. The centres will therefore assume more responsibility for the projection of the unit's research mission. Part of this shift will involve the further development of the physical infrastructure and research environment that has grown since 2014. More use will be made of recently-established facilities, such as dedicated rooms for creative writing and film-editing, which are part of our development of a creative practice suite. This will allow the unit to sustain its activities and increase momentum towards the development of large research projects that can attract external funding. This extension of the role of centres will provide the context in which staff will be supported towards the adoption of research leadership roles within the unit and the wider School. Further opportunities for staff development will come through the unit and School's goal to work closely with DJCAD, the School of Business and other disciplines to build a University-wide creative economies strategy that facilitates larger, more ambitious partnership-based work in this area.

The aim of this consolidation is also to drive an increase in funded PhD projects through a combination of a more focused research environment and the continuation of the unit's close engagement with the Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities (SGSAH). From 2020 the unit will also contribute to the University's Doctorate in Professional Practice, which aims to diversify and expand the numbers of postgraduate researchers. This new research route, with its emphasis on professional practice, dovetails with our work with creative economies partners.

The work undertaken since 2014 has seen the unit grow both in size and ambition. It has developed research groupings that are world-leading and impactful, such as our contribution to the AHRC-funded InGame project (see below) and our innovative Comics Studies practice research hub (which has attracted external funding of £1.2M from different sources). Plans to sustain the activity in comics include closer integration with InGame, especially in the development of a strategy to promote research into digital arts and literature. The creative economies strategy is built on a number of partnerships, some local, some national and some international. They include numerous charities and healthcare organisations, such as the NHS and the British Heart Foundation, as well as the creative economies, including publishers like Canongate, D.C. Thomson, and Marvel Comics (see below). Such engagement has allowed the unit to respond proactively to opportunities such as the Tay Cities Deal, which is supported by government funding and includes a bid to create a National Comics Centre (**Murray** sits on the planning board of the trust that will develop the centre). The unit will seek to deepen its connections with local partners to further support the creative economies sector in Dundee.

The unit's impact strategy follows the AHRI's two-fold approach: (1) to build proactively a range of partnerships with non-academic users of our research as a means of embedding impact through collaboration; (2) to support events which engage wider audiences with our research and thereby influence public understanding. The success of this approach during the reporting period is

reflected in the unit's two Impact Case Studies: 'Comics Jam: Public Information Comics' and 'Care Home as Cinematic Community: Enhancing Social Connectivity through Film'. Other examples include the research project on 'Comics as a Creative Economy' which will be developed during the next five years, and research on performance and creative practice in collaboration with a range of practitioners, such as the theatre group ZU-UK and Black Hearted Press. This two-fold approach to facilitating impact and systematically embedding it within research will be sustained during the next five years by refining the planning and peer-support mechanisms within the AHRI to ensure that impact strategies are incorporated into research plans from the start. In addition, the physical infrastructure of our research environment, particularly the spaces occupied by InGame and DCCS, will be used to maximise engagement with the public. This will require a more concerted effort to manage the unit's social media presence. The unit's mechanisms for supporting research impact are described in more detail in Section 3.

1.6 Open Research Environment

Support for Open Access (OA) is provided centrally by the University's Library & Learning Centre (LLC). An LLC liaison representative is a member of the School RKEC and advises the committee on all matters relating to open research. Outputs and data sets that meet OA requirements are made available through the LLC's online institutional repository 'Discovery'. All of the unit's submitted 'in-scope' outputs are compliant with OA requirements. Support for an open research environment is additionally provided by the School's dedicated Public Engagement Officer, who promotes public awareness of our research, for example by working with staff to identify and organise events that share research insights with the wider public. The unit's research centres are also committed to an open research culture. **Murray** has worked with the LLC to bring many of his research-based comics online, assigning DOIs to increase visibility and discoverability. Most of these outputs will also have Creative Commons licenses. The unit also invited colleagues from the LLC to run a series of drop-in sessions regarding the promotion of staff research via the institutional repository, which included discussion of open research options and how staff can best raise their research profile online, beyond traditional publishing methods.

1.7 Research Integrity

Research integrity and good practice in research ethics are embedded in the University's strategic priorities (see institutional statement). The unit is supported in these areas by two School of Humanities officers who work together, and with relevant University groups, to raise awareness of the principles articulated in the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* and the University's related procedures. The Research Integrity Lead (RIL) – alongside the Associate Dean for Research who acts as Deputy Lead – is a member of the University Research Integrity Group, advises staff and students on matters relating to research integrity, and is responsible for promoting a culture of research integrity in the School. The RIL also promotes the University's online research integrity training (available since 2016) which is mandatory for postgraduate researchers and recommended for staff. The Research Ethics Officer advises staff and students on ethical standards of research practice involving human participants.

2. People

2.1 Staffing Strategy

Since 2014 the staffing strategy of the unit has been three-fold in its ambitions: (1) to consolidate established research strengths; (2) to make appointments which bridge disciplines and facilitate collaborative research; (3) to build capacity in practice research. New appointments in film studies (**Barnes, Hartford, Salzberg**) and comparative literature (**Gratzke**) have reinforced existing strengths in these areas, and capacity in comics studies has been strengthened with the

appointment of **Nabizadeh**. Creative practice, including creative writing, has been developed with the appointments of **Linsley** and **Yeung**. The joint appointment with the History unit of **M. Morris**, who works on the history and literature of transatlantic slavery, is the most obvious example of the unit's commitment to bridging disciplines, but other new appointments in this reporting cycle also work across different fields and have expanded the range of interdisciplinary activity (**Hartford**, **Nabizadeh**, **Yeung**). The result has been to consolidate and expand a research group that is geared towards innovation and partnership-based working, particularly in the areas of practice research and the creative economies, ensuring longer-term sustainability for these initiatives. The work of the unit has also been supported by five externally-funded postdoctoral researchers in this reporting cycle: Clark (InGame, AHRC), Widger (National Productivity Investment Fund-AHRC), Findlay (Sistema Scotland), Kirtley (ESRC) and Herd (ERASMUS+).

2.2 Staff Development and Support for Research

The unit's structures for staff development and support for research are provided by the AHRI and the School, which in turn reflect the principles of the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers*. Staff development is fostered through an annual process of Objective-Setting & Review (OSAR) run by the Dean and School professoriate, which enables staff to reflect on their progress, to identify any impediments and discuss appropriate professional development opportunities in order to support their career ambitions. The process is designed to support staff and to identify opportunities and routes to increased success. The OSAR process is complemented by the University's Annual Research Review (ARR), which was first implemented in 2016 and offers developmental feedback on research plans, progress and outputs via internal peer review by an ARR panel, formed from members of the School's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC) plus an Associate Dean for Research from another School.

All staff (full-time and part-time) with significant responsibility for research receive a standard 30% (pro rata) workload allocation for research and research-related activity. Recipients of external funding receive additional workload time for research (calculated according to type of project and funding). All staff can apply for a Research & Scholarship Focused Semester (RSFS), which relieves them from most teaching and administrative duties, allowing for a concentrated period of focus on research (typically used to bring a major project to completion or to accelerate a new one). The RSFS scheme is School-based and is managed by RKEC. In addition, all staff can apply to the University for a formal leave of absence (sabbatical) to pursue research, although in recent years the RSFS has become the normal route to enhancing time for research in the School. During this reporting period, five members of the unit have had research leave (one member on two occasions) to develop major projects (e.g., the monographs submitted by **Cook** and **Williams**).

Early career researchers are supported by the institution's provisions for the induction of new staff. These include: working with an academic line manager to agree annual objectives during a three-year probationary period (agreed with the Dean of School); support of a mentor who provides help and advice in the capacity of a 'critical friend' (assigned by the Dean); and mandatory completion of the University's programme for the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in Higher Education. To accommodate these requirements, early career researchers receive a fixed workload allocation of ten percent in year one, followed by five percent in each of years two and three. Early career staff also have access to a cross-institutional Teaching, Research & Academic Mentoring Scheme (TRAM) (see institutional statement). All other staff have access to the voluntary Professional Development Mentoring scheme overseen by the institution's Organisational and Professional Development unit (OPD).

The AHRI supports individual and collaborative research through its budget. Each member of the unit has access to an annual research allowance to support research activities (£800 per annum during this reporting period), and additional funds can be applied for on a responsive-mode basis. RKEC normally meets every two weeks to ensure that funding requests are responded to quickly. Since 2013 it has disbursed £538,389 to researchers across the School to support national and international archival research, conference attendance and public engagement activities. RKEC also organises internal peer review and feedback for colleagues preparing external funding applications, in line with the University's partnership model for grant applications (see institutional statement).

2.3 Postgraduate Researchers

Our membership of the Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities (SGSAH), which was launched in 2014 and is funded by the AHRC and Scottish Funding Council, has transformed the environment for our PGRs by greatly expanding the number of generic and subject-specific training programmes available to postgraduate researchers. All PGRs within the School of Humanities have access to SGSAH's Scotland-wide training and support structures. They provide an extensive combination of core training for arts and humanities researchers, more focused training via three Knowledge Exchange Hubs (Citizenship, Culture and Ethics; Creative Economies; Heritage) and subject-specific training through the Doctoral Training Partnership (known since 2019 as 'Discipline+ Catalysts'). The Creative Economies Knowledge Exchange Hub is led by **Murray** (since 2019).

SGSAH also awards AHRC doctoral studentships in Scotland, of which the unit has received 15 in this reporting cycle. Funded PGRs are required to attend SGSAH induction and Summer School events. They also have access to a Student Development Fund which provides support for archival work, international placements (e.g., for research or the development of language skills), impact activity, highly specialised training, and short work placements to develop research and career skills. SGSAH also runs an internship scheme (one-to-three-month placements). Several of the funded PhD projects are interdisciplinary, with co-supervision coming, for example, from other HEIs in Scotland, other Schools within the University (including Education & Social Work and DJCAD) as well as from other disciplines within the School of Humanities.

The University provides further training opportunities for PGRs offered by OPD, such as the PhD Thesis Bootcamp, which is a series of workshops on writing and editing. The unit's research centres also offer bespoke training for PGRs. Since 2018 the Scottish Centre for Comics Studies has piloted a research training scheme run by **Murray** and **Nabizadeh** in which PGRs lead on the development of a symposium based on their research. There are typically two symposia per year, which involve PGRs inviting guest speakers, running a workshop, chairing a roundtable discussion, and organising the public launch of a comic. PGRs have been supported in a number of internship and research assistant roles with internal partners, such as the University Archives and Museum Services, and external partners, for instance D.C. Thomson and the British Library. **Cook** (with colleagues from Edinburgh and Stirling) ran a doctoral training programme for book historians funded by SGSAH (£15,000 plus internal matched funding).

Supervision of postgraduate researchers is regulated by a code of practice stipulating the minimum number of supervisions (initially once a fortnight and later once a month). PGRs are also supported by a Thesis Monitoring Committee which consists of academic staff other than the supervisors and meets twice per annum (normally June and December). The Thesis Monitoring Committee in June also serves as a formal annual progress review, for which PGRs have to

provide a substantial sample of written work, and determines whether they can proceed into the next year of their research.

Alongside formal training and supervision, PGRs are familiarised with the conventions of academic culture in several ways. They are expected to present their work-in-progress at the School's Postgraduate Forum (held twice per semester) and annual Postgraduate Conference, and to attend research seminars hosted by a cognate research centre. The *Dundee University Review of the Arts* (DURA), an online publication founded and edited by **Low**, also provides an important platform for the creative work of the unit's PGRs. All PGRs are members of at least one of the AHRI centres. The AHRI also supports the career development of PGRs through its Doctoral Fellow scheme. Each year, each AHRI centre has a remunerated Doctoral Fellow attached to it. Doctoral Fellows support and promote the work of the centres and gain wider experience of academia. Once upgraded to full PGR status (usually after the first year of full-time study) PGRs are permitted to tutor on an undergraduate module at Level 1 or 2. This is an important part of career development, and the training and mentoring of PGRs in teaching techniques and assessment is well supported by the institution's Academic Skills Centre.

Postgraduate researchers can apply to the AHRI for financial support for conference attendance and research travel, and since 2013 it has disbursed £17,542 for these purposes. All full-time PGRs in the School of Humanities have shared office space and individual computer facilities from the very start of their research. They are represented formally by the Postgraduate Staff-Student Liaison Committee, which is chaired by the School of Humanities student Vice-President for Postgraduates (VPP). The VPP also sits on RKEC, which helps to integrate the postgraduate research community into the formal work of the School.

2.4 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The School of Humanities has a strong policy of equality, diversity and inclusion, in consonance with the institution's EDI policies. It has appointed an EDI officer to oversee the implementation of EDI policies and to engage with staff, students, student union representatives and professional services to ensure that the Equality Act (2010) is followed, and that inclusion and diversity are embedded within the working culture of the School. It is mandatory for all staff to complete online EDI modules, including 'Diversity in the Workplace' and 'Disability'. EDI is a standing agenda item at RKEC meetings to ensure that all research and research-related matters are considered in that context.

The School's appointment procedures are consonant with the Equality Act (2010) and it is planning an Athena SWAN application. The unit's gender balance on the REF 2021 census date was 10 males and 10 females. The age profile was evenly balanced, with 6 staff in the 30-39 age range, 6 in the 40-49 range, 6 in the 50-59 range, and 2 in the over-60 range. The grade profile of its FTE was: 8 Lecturers, 6 Senior Lecturers, 1 Readers and 4.5 Professors. All Category A staff are on permanent contracts; there were no early career researchers on the census date. The School has flexible working patterns for research staff, who nominate a weekly research day during semesters. The OSAR and ARR processes ensure that research expectations are adjusted for individual circumstances (e.g., parental leave, caring responsibilities, long-term illness). The unit has several PGRs on flexible part-time programmes of research. There has been a focus on diversifying the curricula as well as research trajectories. Several staff members' research areas are relevant to EDI. One of the unit's recent appointments (jointly with History), **M. Morris**, researches and carries out public engagement on Scotland's slave-owning past. Events like Dundee Pride, LGBT+ month and Black History month are highlighted and celebrated within the School.

2.5 Preparation of REF Submission

In preparing its submission, the unit's Planning Group was guided by the University's REF 2021 Code of Practice, which framed our decision-making process in the context of the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. The Planning Group made its decisions on outputs and attributions in a manner that aimed to maximise the overall quality profile for the submission, based on a thorough process of internal and external evaluation. All staff were invited to propose potential Impact Case Studies through a series of impact workshops. The submitted Impact Case Studies reflect the Planning Group's view of the strongest demonstrable research impacts which emanated from the unit in the reporting period. All members of the Planning Group completed mandatory unconscious bias training prior to the decision-making process.

3. Income, infrastructure and facilities

3.1 Income

The external funding generated by the unit during the reporting period has enabled several innovative projects driven by the collaborative, interdisciplinary and public engagement strategies of the unit's research centres. They show that the unit's strategic initiatives have been successful in developing distinctive clusters of expertise which attract external support. In particular, they have enabled the unit to move practice research to a more prominent position.

Centre for Critical & Creative Cultures:

Centre members **Linsley** (co-investigator), **Murray** (co-investigator) and Clark (postdoctoral researcher) are involved in the AHRC Creative Industries Clusters Programme, InGame (2018-23), a collaboration with Abertay and St Andrews universities which connects research with practice in the local games-sector. The project includes an award of £1,658,483 for Dundee, of which £71,537 was apportioned to the unit in this reporting period. Another major success for the centre is its establishment of Dundee as a National Hub for the Being Human festival of the humanities. Led by **Cook** during the last four years, this initiative has resulted in awards of over £20,000 in funding from the AHRC and British Academy. **Cook** was also awarded a British Academy grant for his research on Swift's poetry (2016, £2,240), now published as a monograph. **Gunn** and **Low** received funding from the Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) for a project investigating the relevance of the essay as a tool for young people to engage with contemporary challenges (2019, £7,908). The RSE also funded projects by **Cook** on Walter Scott (with Edinburgh) (2016-17, £9,898) and by **Hoyle** on un-filmed Scottish biopics (2015, £4,000). **Low's** work on 'glocalisation' in Caribbean educational textbook publishing was supported by the Carnegie Trust (2014-16, £2,500). The Carnegie Trust also funded **Salzberg's** research (with colleagues from the School of Health Sciences) on care homes and cinema (2016, £6,165) which underpins one of the unit's Impact Case Studies.

Scottish Centre for Comics Studies:

Since it was established in 2014 under the leadership of **Murray**, the centre has generated a substantial amount of funding for research and knowledge exchange, including support-in-kind. Examples include: £150,000 from the Rank Foundation to run the Dundee Comics Creative Space (DCCS); £28,770 from the Erasmus+ project Food Aware; £7,499 from Sistema Scotland; £10,000 from the University's Leverhulme Research Centre for Forensic Science (to create a series of comics based on the centre's knowledge-exchange priorities, e.g. public understanding of DNA analysis). The centre has also received a range of funding to develop public information comics (the subject of one of the unit's Impact Case Studies) and related workshops, for example: £5,000 from the Wellcome Trust for a conference on Graphic Medicine; £3,000 from Dundee City Council; £2,500 from the Brittle Bone Society; £7,500 from the Scottish Drug Forum (with the School of

Dentistry). **Murray** also received £1,000 from Marvel Comics for a project to mark Marvel's eightieth anniversary, and £3,000 from the Great War Dundee Commemoration Project (a collaboration with the School's History unit). **Nabizadeh** was awarded £18,000 from Scottish Universities Insight Institute (SUII) for a project on comics and bereavement.

Centre for Poetic Innovation:

The centre has attracted funding to support a range of partnerships. **Roberts**, as co-investigator with centre colleagues in St Andrews, was part of an award from the RSE for a project on poetry and performance, in partnership with the StAnza poetry festival (2017, £8,701). **Yeung** and **Roberts**, in collaboration with the Scottish Poetry Library, won support for an AHRC/SGSAH National Productivity Investment Fund postdoctoral placement (£27,753, 2018-19).

Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities (SGSAH):

Income for postgraduate research (fees and stipends) from the AHRC, via SGSAH, during this reporting period was £528,148 (15 funded PGRs).

3.2 Infrastructure

The AHRI and its constituent centres are the focal points of the unit's research environment and its mechanisms for supporting research. The AHRI is managed by the School of Humanities Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC). The committee is co-chaired by the Associate Dean for Research & Scholarship and the Associate Dean for Knowledge Exchange & Partnerships (**Murray**). Its core membership is comprised of the heads of the AHRI's research centres, which embeds regular dialogue between the centres in the School's research management structure. RKEC also includes representation from the School's PGRs, the Library & Learning Centre, and the institution's Research & Innovation Services.

The AHRI supports the unit's research in a number of ways. As noted in section 2.2, for example, it disburses the School research budget to support a wide range of research activity, and it coordinates the peer review of external funding applications for staff and PGRs. The AHRI hosts a Humanities Research Forum on a periodic basis, a one-day event for all School of Humanities researchers designed to build links across disciplines and other subjects in the University. In all of its work, the AHRI is supported by a Research Administration Lead, a Postgraduate Officer and a Public Engagement Officer.

The AHRI has also taken steps to build support mechanisms for research impact: it organises periodic Impact Accelerator events, which are designed to help staff identify impact pathways for their research; it encourages staff to apply for an RSFS to focus on impact projects; peer review of funding applications pays close attention to impact plans (where appropriate); and it commits funds to support impact activity. The projects behind the unit's Impact Case Studies both received contributions from the AHRI budget.

The unit's researchers are further supported by institution-level offices in preparing and costing funding applications: Research & Innovation Services and Research Finance (see institutional statement). The newly-established (2019) Doctoral Academy, under the directorship of **Gratzke**, is enhancing support for all PGRs in the University (see institutional statement).

3.3 Facilities

Staff and postgraduates have access to several shared spaces within the School and the University. In the School, most research-related spaces are based in the Baxter Suite, alongside the School Office and meeting rooms. The Baxter Suite contains a Comics Studio, a Creative

Writing Room and a Film Editing Suite/Resource Room, as well as a postgraduate research space, exhibition area, and a lecture theatre with flexible seating that is used for guest lectures, postgraduate fora, conferences, exhibitions, and launches. On a different part of the campus, the research of the film studies team is supported by a Film Screening Room. The School also has significant research resources and space in the city's Vision Building, which houses several enterprises associated with the creative industries, as well as facilities for the InGame project and the Dundee Comics Creative Space.

Members of the unit are based in the Tower Extension building of the University's main campus, adjacent to the other disciplines within the School and a short walk from the School administrative offices and reception. Each member of staff has their own individual office. The office space for PGRs is also situated in the Tower Extension building, which facilitates the integration of postgraduates into the research culture of the School.

The unit's researchers make extensive use of the resources of the LLC, including microfilm reading facilities and inter-library loans service. The LLC also has a reciprocal arrangement with St Andrews University Library which allows for shared access to the collections of the two libraries. The unit is also supported by the University Archive Services, which holds rich resources for the unit's researchers, including the archives of the Dundee Rep Theatre, the Artists Book Collection Dundee (ABCD), and the archives of publishers such as Canongate. There are also significant holdings for comics and film research, including rare comics books, a large collection of comics and film scripts, original artwork, and the archive of the Scottish screenwriter Alan Sharp.

4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

4.1 Collaborations, Networks and Wider Engagement

Collaborative work is central to the research and impact strategy of the AHRI and its constituent centres. Researchers in the English Language & Literature unit have forged strong and unique collaborations with a wide spectrum of academic and non-academic partners. They are evidence of the significance of our research and expertise, and of our wider contributions to the discipline, society and economy. In particular, the unit's development of a strategy for creative economies and practice research has afforded the opportunity to work closely with a range of internal and external partners. All of this is evident in the activity supported by the unit's research centres, examples of which are given below.

Centre for Critical & Creative Cultures:

The centre is involved in the AHRC-funded Creative Industries Clusters Programme, InGame (2018-23), which includes **Linsley** and **Murray** as co-investigators and Clark as a postdoctoral researcher. InGame is a collaboration with Abertay, St Andrews and the creative industries in Dundee (e.g., Biome and Beano Studios) and connects research with commercial activity through a research platform designed to lower the risk threshold for creative activity. It promotes and supports games-sector innovation, and as such is an important contributor to the local economy which has a substantial games sector. The centre is the home, since 2015, of the Scottish Hub for the UK's Being Human festival which, under the stewardship of **Cook**, has generated collaborations with a wide range of partners to showcase the unit's and wider University's research to public audiences, including the Dundee Science Centre, Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA), Leisure & Culture Dundee, the BBC and the Magic Lantern Society. The unit's drama company, JOOT, led by **George**, showcased its research on performability through public performances of, for example, Morris' *The Tables Turned* (2014) and Scott's *Macduff's Cross* (2019), the latter staged for a public audience at Scott's library at Abbotsford. **Robson** established the Scottish-

European Theatre Network, an interdisciplinary and international collaboration, with an advisory panel that includes members from the Czech Republic, Germany and Spain. He also collaborated with St Andrews and the BBC on a radio drama 'Listen in the Dark' event at the Byre Theatre (2015). **Cook** is the founder and head of the Authorship & Appropriation Research Network (2016-present). Based in Dundee, this is a European-wide network which brings together scholars in these areas and has so far organised two conferences. **Devarenne** works with non-academic partners, including the Defence Science & Technology Laboratory, Porton Down and the Biome Collective, Dundee. **Hoyle** collaborates with Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA) on research-related film screenings. The unit has also developed a network of contacts in the publishing industry through the online magazine founded and edited by **Low**, the *Dundee University Review of the Arts* (DURA). **M. Morris**, with Emma Bond (St Andrews), led a project about the transnational history of Scotland, funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh (2019-20): this was a collaboration with heritage organisations, including the McLean Museum and Art Gallery, New Lanark Heritage Centre, the Scottish Fisheries Museum and V&A Dundee, to explore Scotland's history through objects of international trade (such as jute, herring, cotton, sugar).

Scottish Centre for Comics Studies:

The SCCS has embedded comics creative practice within research activity through knowledge exchange partnerships, especially in the creative economies. Funding from the Rank Foundation (£150,000) was partly used to employ a comics artist and scholar (Herd) to coordinate the knowledge-exchange activities of Dundee Comics Creative Space (DCCS), initially designed as a platform for comics creators. DCCS developed a participatory iterative methodology for creating comics with partners which has enabled us to employ comics creators through a series of funded projects (e.g., £15,603 from the ESRC for participation in an eye-tracking project; £28,770 from Erasmus+; £18,000 from the Scottish Universities Insight Institute; £10,000 from the Leverhulme Centre for Forensic Science). **Murray** and **Nabizadeh** have used these structures to help sustain the comics creative economy by bringing creators together with industry partners, the wider university, charities, and other groups, to promote citizenship and community, creative participation, and problem-solving, building collaborations across the city and further afield.

On the basis of its research on comics as a medium for knowledge exchange and public engagement, the SCCS has also produced public information comics for Dundee City Council (which provided £3,000 of funding), the Scottish Drug Forum (with £7,500 of competitive funding for that joint project) and the Brittle Bone Society (which provided £2,500 of funding). Comics publishers Marvel Comics, D.C. Thomson and Rebellion have also been partners on various projects, and have provided internship opportunities and employment to comics creators. Through these networks and partnerships, the SCCS makes a material contribution to the creative economies of Dundee, employing over 40 artists and, further afield, working with comics creators and scholars from around the world, including Florida, San Diego, Sydney and Toronto. It also makes a valuable contribution to society through its educational comics. This is evidenced by the considerable international impact of the healthcare comics produced by the centre and its partners, notably *Fibromyalgia and Us* (2017), downloaded nearly 13,000 times (June 2020), and *Close to the Heart* (2018), a collaboration with the NHS and British Heart Foundation. The centre's work with Sistema Scotland evaluated stakeholder responses to their Big Noise Douglas project through a series of comics workshops and a commissioned report. The centre also collaborates with Dundee Contemporary Arts (DCA) and V&A Dundee, running several research seminars, symposia, and festival activities. Examples include the V&A digital comics project (the museum contributed £7,500) and a symposium in partnership with Great War Dundee, a city-wide commemorative project led by the University's History unit (GWD contributed £3,000). The centre also established and runs a network dedicated to developing a strategy for the archival

preservation of British comics history. **Murray** and **Nabizadeh** have been proactive in establishing interdisciplinary research ties with other academic areas in the University, including Education and Social Work (project on fibromyalgia), Law (the graphic justice initiative), Dentistry (through a partnership with the Scottish Drug Forum) and Life Sciences (a project on coeliac disease).

Centre for Poetic Innovation:

Roberts has a long-established partnership with the Scottish Poetry Library in Edinburgh, continued in this reporting cycle via a Collaborative Doctoral Award (2013-16), shared public engagement events (such as the 2016 Thomas A. Clark Symposium), the establishment of an archive of the work of Heather **Yeung** (2018), and a National Productivity Incentive Award (with **Yeung**, 2018-19). He has well-established European research links in the field of Innovative and Digital Poetry, including with the University of Bergen (Norway), the University of Aalborg Centre for Research in Contemporary Poetry (Denmark) and Falmouth University, all of which have been involved in networking meetings and workshops under the centre's auspices, and in connection with the RSE-funded project on 'Poetry and Performance: Embodied Poetic Experience in Public Spaces'. The centre also has ongoing links with StAnza Poetry Festival (St Andrews), through **Roberts'** research project (with Elodie Laügt) which applies the methods of Literary Studies and Social Anthropology to festival community-building.

4.2 Other Contributions to Discipline Research Base

Members of the unit have made substantial contributions to the general operation of the discipline at national and international levels during this reporting cycle. **Murray** is the founding editor of *Studies in Comics*; **Varvogli** is an editor of the Contemporary American Literature series (Humanities e-books); **Yeung** is an editor of *Northern Scotland*. Other members – including **George, Hartford, Hoyle, Low, T. Morris, Nabizadeh, Roberts, Varvogli** -- serve on editorial boards for several journals, such as *Critique: Studies on Contemporary Fiction*, the *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, the *Journal of Graphic Novels & Comics* and *Modern & Contemporary France*. Members of the unit have peer-reviewed manuscripts for a wide range of academic journals (including, for example, *Art History*, *Contemporary Literature*, *Film-Philosophy*, the *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, the *Journal of British & Irish Innovative Poetry*, *MLR*, *Modern Philology*, *Review of English Studies* and *Wasafiri*) and book manuscripts for many different publishers (including, for example, Bloomsbury, Palgrave Macmillan, Peter Lang, Routledge, Wiley-Blackwell, and the university presses of Cambridge, Edinburgh, Manchester, Mississippi, Ohio State and Toronto). **Cook** and **Yeung** are on the Prize Judging Panel for the Saltire Academic Book of the Year, **Roberts** is an assessor for the Carnegie Trust, and **Murray** is a reviewer for the Volkswagen Foundation. A large volume of invited talks in this reporting period is further testimony to the recognition of the unit's research. They include keynote addresses by **Cook** at a conference on satire at York St John University (2018), **Devarenne** at a conference on speculative fiction at the University of Liverpool (2019) and **Nabizadeh** at a conference on memory at St Andrews University (2018).

Awards, honours and visiting positions

Gunn was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature (2020). Her book *Infidelities* won the Edge Hill Short Story Award (2015). **Robson** won the *Paragraph: A Journal of Modern Critical Theory* Essay Prize (2015). **Yeung** (with Studio Alec Finlay) won Scottish Design Awards Grand Prix and Best Publication (2015). **Barnes** was a stipendiary visiting researcher at the University of Exeter (2017); **Gunn** was a visiting fellow at Merton College, Oxford (2019-20); **Robson** was a full-funded visiting lecturer at the University of Malta (2015); **Yeung** is a visiting lecturer in writing at the Manchester School of Art (ongoing).

Other service to the discipline

Members of the unit have made substantial contributions to the running of the Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities (SGSAH) Doctoral Training Partnership since its inception in 2014.

Cook, George, Murray and **Robson** have served on its national awarding panels. The SGSAH Scottish and English Literatures Panel and their nationwide 'Discipline+ Catalyst' training hub for literature are run by **Robson**, and **Murray** is the head of the SGSAH Creative Economies Hub, based in Dundee. **Williams** is the chairperson of the Scottish Word and Image Group (SWIG), which has close ties with the International Association of Word and Image Studies (IAWIS).

The range of activity indicated above is further testimony to the success of the strategy set out by the unit in 2014, which placed strong emphasis on collaboration and public engagement, as well as to the support structure provided by its wider environment.